

DR. PRATT'S
SERMON

PREACH'D

At the *Savoy-Church*,

ON THE

FAST-DAY,

JANUARY the 19th. 170 $\frac{3}{4}$

DISCOURSE
SERMON

PREACHED

At the Grove Church

ON THE



FAST DAY

JANUARY the 10th 1703

A
S E R M O N

P R E A C H ' D

At the *Savoy-Church*,

O N

W E D N E S D A Y the 19th of *January*, 170³/₄.

B E I N G T H E

F A S T - D A Y,

A P P O I N T E D

For the Imploring of a Blessing from
Almighty G O D, upon Her M A J E S T Y, and
Her Allies, Engaged in the present War : As also,
for the Humbling our selves before Him, in a deep
Sense of His heavy Displeasure, shew'd forth in the
late Dreadful T E M P E S T, &c.

By S A M U E L P R A T, D. D. K

One of the Clerks of the Closet to the Q U E E N.

Publis'd at the Earnest Request of the Parishoners.

L O N D O N,

Printed by J. L. for Henry Bonwicke, at the Red Lyon in
St. Paul's Church-yard. M D C C I V.

LONDON

At the Court of the
Commons of Great Britain
in the House of Commons

THE
BILLS

APPOINTED

THE
BILLS
OF THE
HOUSE OF COMMONS
IN THE
YEAR OF OUR LORD
ONE THOUSAND
EIGHT HUNDRED
AND FORTY
FOUR



BY
THE
HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRINTED BY
J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD

LONDON

Printed by J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD
In the Strand, near the Theatre Royal

A
S E R M O N

P R E A C H ' D in the
Savoy-Church, &c.

N A H U M i. 3.

The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the Wicked: The Lord bath his way in the Whirlwind, and in the Storm, and the Clouds are the dust of his feet.

TH E S E Words are part of *the Burden of Nineveh*, a great and populous City, a sinful People, who having long deserved Judgments, yet had received temporal Felicity in a succession of Mercies, and withal, had Warnings, and Calls, and Denunciations, time after time, to awaken them out of their sinful Course.

Ecclef. 8. 11.

It was an Hundred and fifty Years before this, according to Vulgar Computation, that the Prophet *Jonah* had threaten'd its Overthrow ; which, by the timely Intervention of Repentance, and the solemn Acts of Fasting and Humiliation, was postponed to new Mercies, and longer Forbearances : so that hitherto their Judgment lingred, their Desolation was delayed, to see first, if that Amendment which they pretended to, would last ; and then, after fresh Provocations, to see if they wou'd Repent again with more Sincerity. But they were, alas ! so far from it, that because *Judgment was not speedily executed*, and the rather because it had been so often denounced, and they had hitherto escaped, *the hearts of the Children of these Men were fully set in them to do evil* ; and that Forbearance and Long-sufferance which God Almighty shewed towards 'em, was so far from being an Inducement to Reformation, that it operated to the making them more Careless and Secure, contrary to the Use which ought to have been made thereof. This the Prophet *Zephany* takes notice of, in the last *Ver.* of the 2^d Chap. *This is the rejoicing City that dwelt carelessly ; that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me.* As if she had meant, Let the Prophets and the Preachers say what they will, notwithstanding all their Reproaches and Exclamations, *I am, still I am* as I was, a great, a populous, a flourishing City ; I contained Six-score Thousand Souls Two Hundred Years ago ; and Fifty Years after that, I was threatened to be destroy'd, yes, within Forty Days ; but see now, I have ever since flourished and encreased in People, and Riches, and Dominion, so that I make at present such a figure
in

in the World as if there were *none beside me*, that is equal to me, or like me.

Such an Estimate which that People made of themselves occasioned probably these Words of my Text ; for this stubborn, this rebellious and Luciferian Pride, and Self-Esteem seem'd to call in question Two of the Divine Attributes, to wit, the Power and the Justice of God, for while a Sinful People remain unpunish'd, the Sinfullest and the Foolishest Part of them are apt to conclude, either that all things are governed by Chance or Nature, and that there is no God ; or that he is restrain'd by the Laws of Fate, and so has no Power to show his Resentments ; or else that he is at least careless and negligent of what is done here below ; So that the Divine Being either cannot, or will not Punish the Evil Doer.

The Text in hand therefore is a flat and peremptory Answer to all such impious Suggestions. The Prophet telling them that although God Almighty *is slow to anger*, yet he is *great in power*, and that *he will not at all acquit the wicked* ; showing them that his long Sufferance and Forbearance is by no means occasioned by his Want of Power or Forgetfulness of Justice, but 'tis the Nature and Property of God to be slow to anger ; yet in that there is nothing that should cause the wicked either to exult or to think themselves secure ; Seeing the long Sufferance and Forbearance of God doth not make at all for 'em, if they persist in their Impenitency : for there are two other Considerations which they should take along with 'em ; to wit, that God is powerful, and that he is just. The Lord *is slow to anger*, not that

he can't right himself if he would, for he *is great in power*, or that the Easiness of his Nature will not suffer him to punish Sinners; far off be such a Thought, for *he will not at all acquit the wicked*.

This former Part of my Text then contains Three Propositions.

- I. First, That God Almighty is long Suffering and *slow to anger*.
- II. Secondly, That the Long Sufferance of God is no Sign of Imperfection inasmuch as he *is great in power*. Nor
- III. Thirdly, Is it any Sign of Irregularity in his Judgment or Proceedings towards the Children of Men but is consistent enough with the Eternal Method of his Justice, That *he will not at all acquit the wicked*.

These Three Propositions require neither much Time nor Pains to prove, and therefore the Prophet doth not go about to enforce 'em by any Arguments because the Proof lies in the Holy Scriptures visible enough to those who believe 'em, and of no Use to those who believe them not.

I shall Instance to you therefore but a few Places upon each Head.

- I. *First*, That God is *slow to anger*, is the Account which He gives of himself, and which he seems to take Delight in Publishing.

Thus

Thus to the *Israelites* even that murmuring and rebellious Generation. *The Lord passed by and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in Goodness and Truth.* Exod. 34. 6. And this was not with a temporary Respect only to that Time and that People, for to him in this Particular give all the Prophets Witness as to the Essential Nature and Property of God. *The Lord (saith David) is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in Mercy;* Psal. 103. 8. where we may Observe a Fulness of Expression which shows him invariable and infinite in this as he is in all other his Attributes, as appears farther in the *86 Psal. v. 15. Thou O God art a God full of Compassion, and gracious, long suffering and plenteous in mercy and truth;* where the Terms *full of compassion*, as in the *145 Psal.* likewise *8 v. and great in Mercy* as 'tis there expressed, and *plenteous in Mercy* declare to us the unquestionable Extensiveness of his Tenderness, provided we qualify our selves for it, as it is condition'd in the *5 v. of the* *86 Psal. Thou Lord art good and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.*

Which reminds us of the Difference between the *Long-Sufferance*, and the *Mercy* of God, he is slow to anger, and long-suffering towards all Men indiscriminately, it is the Method of his Providence so to be (generally speaking) and excepting only some particular Instances, as when his Temporal as well as Eternal Judgments speedily overtake the wicked (for some special Demonstration of his Power and Justice) as in the Cases of *Nadab and Abihu*, of *Corah* and his Complices, of *Ananias and Sapphira*, and the

Lev. 10.
Numb. 6. 2.
Acts 5.

the like; there is never any Exceptions of his Mercy. But if the Sinner repents and turns to him, or calls upon him penitently and faithfully, he is not only slow to anger but ready to forgive, which is the proper Exposition of Slowness to Anger in this Place. Otherwise this Forbearance of God towards impenitent and obdurate Sinners, *who treasure up wrath against the day of wrath*, is not upon the foot of Tenderness and Compassion, but for Holy and Eternal Reasons of Divine Providence: As

1. Sometimes he suffers People to Sin without Judgment very speedily overtaking them, to the Intent they may first fill up the Measure of their Iniquity, and become ripe for Judgment, while he snatches away others sometimes to as great a future Punishment, or corrects 'em visibly by as great Temporal Chastisements, as those who have Sinn'd more or longer; and this according to equal Distributions of Justice, because had these lived longer, they would in the Fore-knowledge of God have as fully compleated their Iniquity, as they upon whom a more lingering Judgment attended.

2. And sometimes he delays his Judgments upon a Nation or single Persons a great while, though he doth foresee they will never bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance, to shew the Absoluteness and Uncontroulableness of his Will, that he doth not confine himself to any reveal'd Rules, as to the Modes and Circumstances of his Dispensations here below; but that he will distribute the Tokens of his Vengeance, how, and where, and when he pleases. As,

3. *Thirdly,*

3. *Thirdly*, for Instance, He sometimes Visits a People with some Judgment or Calamity of far less Consequence than in all humane appearance they then deserved: and this may seem less than the delaying or protracting of his Anger, for this seems to be an abatement or lessening of it; but in this He is only *slow to Anger*, and delays the Consummation of his Vengeance, for the greater Vindication of his Justice; when He shall come to execute heavy and terrible Judgments, which might have seem'd too sudden, at least, if not too severe, unless Men had slighted lesser Judgments, which were sent to be the Tokens and Fore-runners of greater. I omit other Reasons and Cases, because these Arguments don't strictly belong to the Proposition I am now upon, to wit, That God Almighty is *slow to Anger*, with regard to Mercy, according to that Passage in the ixth Chap. of *Nehemiah*, ver. 17. Although the *Israelites* had refused to Obey, neither were mindful of the Wonders which God had done among them, and hardened their Necks. Thou, O God, say the Heads of the *Levites*, art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not. I need not insist any longer upon this Proposition, nor so long on the next, to wit,

Secondly, That God is great in Power. For every one who so much as owns the Being of a God, doth at the same time acknowlege the Almightyness of his Power. And what do we mean by the *Deity*, or God, but at least an Omnipotent Being? who
although

although he may sometimes be *slow* to do what he can, yet is always of *Power* enough to do what he will.

The *Power* of God, coming in here in my Text between two Articles, to wit, of his Mercy and his Justice, it may probably have respect to both, for his Power is equal both to Save and to Destroy, Ye have both at least set forth in the Context, *Ver. 6, 7. Who can stand before his indignation? who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble.*

And if Men would duly consider the Natural Variableness and Instability of all Worldly Things, the Powerful Influences of Planetary Aspects, which operate so often, so variously, and so vehemently upon the Earth; the Dangerousness of Meteors, and other Revolutions in the Air; the Defectibility and Weakness of the Earth it self, occasion'd by continual *Vulcano's*, and frequent Earthquakes; and that we stand upon a very rotten Foundation, upon the Out-side and Crust of (in all probability) a hollow Sphere; that we are no more secure of the Ground it self, than of the Houses we build upon it, since one as well as the other are subject both to Fire and Falling.

If we consider how divers unexpected Variations of Weather and Seasons might easily put every Country Yearly in danger of a consuming Famine, in such an one as Ours especially, where an Excess of Moisture would be as fatal as an Excess of Drought.

If we consider what frequent Pestilences there are in the *Eastern* Parts of the ^{is} World, and how apt that Contagion hath been to dilate it self to Us *Westward*, and how busily perhaps Celestial Signs stir up the Noxious Vapours of the Earth to enter into a Depopulating Confederacy against us.

If we consider how easily a Fire of War is kindled, how small a Spark sometimes deflagrates over many Provinces, and, as at this time, almost all over *Europe*; and upon what small Accidents the Balance of War depends, humanely speaking — we cannot stand less amazed at that mighty Power of God, which hath hitherto preserved us of this Nation in Mercy, than at that Power which sometimes threateneth or visits us with Judgment. In a word, the Two-edged Sword of God's Power, both to Save and to Destroy, with reference to the Sons of Men, is fully set forth in that one Passage, *Jer. 32. 18. Thou shewest loving-kindness unto thousands, and recompensest the iniquity of the Fathers into the bosom of their Children after them: the Great, the Mighty God, the Lord of Hosts is his Name. Ver. 19. Great in counsel, and mighty in work, (for thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men, to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.)* Which leads me to the Third and Last Proposition of my Text,

That He will not at all acquit the Wicked.

III.

God Almighty is *slow to Anger*, with regard to Mercy and Forgiveness; And he may be likewise sometimes *slow to Anger*, with regard to future Judgment,

C

ment,

Exod. 20. 5.

ment, which, according to the Fore-knowledge of his Will, he hath determined upon obdurate Offenders; for notwithstanding he may sometimes seem slow in the Methods of his Vengeance, yet it will be sure, for *he will not at all acquit the Wicked.* So Numb. xiv. 18. *The Lord is long-suffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty: Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation.*

This Determination of *God's Will*, is the necessary Result of Divers of his Attributes, to wit, his *Veracity*, his *Holiness*, and his *Justice*.

1st. His *Veracity*, inasmuch as He hath often declared himself to that purpose. *I will not* (saith he) *justify the Wicked.* Now it would be a Justification of the Wicked, if they should at all escape Punishment; it would put 'em upon the same foot with the Righteous, and upon that account take off all distinction between Good and Evil. But Rom. 2. 2. *we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth, against them which commit such things.*

2^{dly}. It would be inconsistent with the *Holiness* of God, to acquit the Wicked: *He is a holy God,* (saith Joshua,) *he is a jealous God, he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.* Where you see that the *Holiness* of God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity unpunish'd, is an Argument and Reason why God will not acquit the Guilty.

3^{dly}. The

3dly. The *Justice* of God is eminently concern'd in bringing the Wicked to Punishment, sooner or later. Thus, in the *Captivity* of *Israel*, the *Levites* acknowledg'd, *Thou art just in all that is* Nehem. 9. 33. *brought upon us : for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly.* So religious *Job*, *Doth God per-* Chap. 8. 3. *vert judgment, or doth the Almighty pervert justice ?* And *St. Paul* still more appositely to the present purpose, *Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance ?* Rom. 3. 5, 6. *(I speak as a man) God forbid : for then how shall God judge the world ?*

God acknowledges Himself to be a *Judge*, the *Judge of all the Earth ; And (as Abraham saith)* Gen. 18. 25. *shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right ?* The *Judge of all Men : God the Judge of all.* By which Heb. 12. 23. *Passages* we are to understand not only that we are in the *Hands* and *Power* of God, as *Malefactors* are in the *Power* of a *Judge* ; but also, that in the *Retributions* of *Good* and *Evil*, God *Almighty* will exercise the part of a *Judge*, and upon *Examination* and *Proof*, proceed to righteous *Judgment* : *I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to* Jer. 17. 10. *give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.*

So that notwithstanding the *Time* of *Retributions* may be, and is often deferred ; and though the *Time* of *Forbearance*, even under the greatest *Provocations*, be prolong'd, yet every *Man* may say with *Job*, *If* Chap. 10. 14. *I sin, then thou markest me, and thou wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity.*

This is sufficient for the *First* part of my *Text*, which sets forth in general *Terms* the *Long-sufferance*, the *Power*, and the *Justice* of God.

I come now to the Latter part, in which we have an Amplification of the former, in such terms as are applicable to the Great and Serious Business of This Day, *The Lord hath his way in the Whirlwind, and in the Storm, and the Clouds are the dust of his feet.* Which Particularities, I say, amplify the Three foregoing Propositions. For in every one of these Three Instances now before us, something may be observed, relating to the *Long-sufferance*, the *Power*, and the *Justice* of God.

First then, *The Lord hath his way in the Whirlwind.* I scarce need, I think, premise to you the meaning of this Phrase, *The Lord hath his way.*

The way of the Lord, is a Form of Speech very frequent in the Bible: His *Ways* are his *Dispensations*, and his *Judgments*. *All his ways are judgment*; that is to say, *A God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is He.* So *Psal. 103. 7. He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.*

Sometimes indeed 'tis put for the *Holiness* and *Majesty* of God, *Psal. 77. 13. Thy way, O God, is in the Sanctuary: Who is so great a God as our God?*

Sometimes for the *Statutes* and *Ordinances* of God; as, *O that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!* *Psal. 81. 13.*

Sometimes for the *Doctrine* of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as *Aquila* and *Priscilla* expounded to *Apollos* the way of God more perfectly, *Act. 18. 26.*

Sometimes for the *Work* and the *Reward* too, as when Our Saviour saith, *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life*, *Joh. 14. 6.*

But

But all this is Criticism. The Words are here to be understood according to the Vulgar and General acceptation of that Phrase, as it signifies the Manner or Method, the Course that any one takes, as, *The Way of a Man; The Way of the Just; The Way of the Wicked; The Way of one's Father; and, The Way of all Flesh.* Prov. 14. 12.
Eccl. 2. 18.
Psal. 1. 1.
1 King. 15. 26.
Gen. 6. 12.

Well then, the Lord hath several *Ways*, that is, several Methods of his Providence: He makes use of several Means: He takes divers, and sometimes different Courses in his Dealings with Mankind. For Instance, *The Lord hath his Way in the Whirlwind.*

There are some places of Scripture in which the word *Whirlwind* is used only figuratively, by a Metaphor, for the Wrath and Vengeance of God descending any manner of way suddenly and violently upon a Nation or People, as *Prov. 1. 27. When your Fear cometh as Desolation, and your Destruction cometh as a Whirlwind; when Distress and Anguish cometh upon you.* Likewise the Prophet *Jeremy*, chap. 23. 19. *Behold, a Whirlwind of the Lord is gone forth in fury, even a grievous Whirlwind; it shall fall grievously upon the head of the Wicked.* Terrours of Conscience also are compared to a *Tempest, East-wind, and Storm.* Job 27. 20, 21.

But in the Text before us, we have no need to depart from the plain literal signification of the words; forasmuch as in all Ages, and all Countries, God Almighty hath visited Mankind with Whirlwind and Storm, as visibly from his own Hand, as with Fire or Sword, Famine or Pestilence. And in all such Publick Visitations, God Almighty hath divers Dispensations of his Providence, with regard to his *Mercy*, as well as his *Power and Justice*; of

of which there are as many notable Instances in those that Escape, as in those that Suffer. But I shall confine my self within the Particularities of my Text, *The Lord hath his way in the Whirlwind, and in the Storm.*

Sometimes He takes this Way to summon the World to Repentance: And we ought always to apply such Dispensations to that Use, before the Tempest and Whirlwind gets into a Man's Soul; for then it may be too late, and he may be overwhelmed on a sudden with Despair: Therefore it is better to make a penitent Use of the outward and literal Visitation, that Comfort may be found against the figurative and inward Sense, to apply our selves timely to the Mercies and Merits of Christ, whereby He may be *as an Hiding-place from the Wind, and a Covert from the Tempest.* That as Christ stilled the Tempest at Sea, so by an Almighty Word of Comfort He may still and quiet the troubled Conscience.

Isa. 32. 2.

Mat. 8. 24.

2dly. *The Lord hath his way in the Whirlwind, and in the Storm;* sometimes to Vindicate his own Honour, when the Generation is Unbelieving, Irreligious, and Prophane; when Men make a Scorn and Contempt of Religion; when they seem to despise the still and gentle Ways of God; then hath He recourse to loud and publick Ways of showing forth his Power and his Justice; then doth He something *to strain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth.* And nothing so publickly shews the Contemptibility of all Humane Power and Grandeur, as Publick and National

Isa. 23. 9.

National Judgments do; when God calls all to Judgment, High and Low, Rich and Poor one with another in this World, in token that He will do so likewise in the World to come: For as we see now, so much more shall we then, that neither the Securities of Nature, Art, or Numbers will avail; for, *Thus saith the Lord*, (speaking of the Enemies of Religion) *Though they be quiet, and likewise many, yet thus shall they be cut down, when he shall pass through them*, Ver. 12. of this Chap.

3dly, *The Lord bath his way in the Whirlwind, and in the Storm*, sometimes as Fore-runners of greater Judgments to come, and that speedily. There are divers great Examples of this in History, as of a Pestilence which succeeded that dreadful Tempest in *Holland*, Anno 1367. Or to go no farther off than the great Plague in the Thirty sixth Year of Queen *Elizabeth*, Our Chronicles tell us, that dreadfully Tempestuous Weather was both the Prologue and Epilogue to a sad Tragedy.

As it is sometimes of great Disturbances and Com-motions in the State, so that violent Storm at *Naples* in the Year 1343. was a Fore-runner of the Troubles and Confusions of that Kingdom. As likewise of a general Plague not many Years after.

And by the way, neither these fore-running Judgments, nor those that came after, were observed to fall most heavily upon the greatest Delinquents: For 'tis remarkable that in an Inundation at *Venice* about the same time, not one Ship was saved so much as in Harbour, except one which had Four Hundred Robbers in it which were to be Transported.

Servat

—*Servat multos Fortuna nocentes,*

Luke 13. 4.

as *Petrarch* upon this Occasion remarks out of *Lucan*, this Our Blessed Saviour takes Notice of, in reference to those *Galileans*, whose Blood *Pilate* mingled with their Sacrifices, and those Eighteen upon whom the Tower of *Siloam* fell; for in National Judgments it is one great and aggravating Article of the Nation's Calamity, that the righteous perish from off the Earth.

And I must observe likewise to you, that National Judgments are commonly a Sign of God's Anger against the People in general, more than against the Rulers in particular, so that it is no such unaccountable thing in our Own Annals, that more Earthquakes, Whirlwinds, Tempests, Pestilence, Fiery Meteors, Inundations, Drouths, Dearth of Corn, Conflagrations and Prodigies, happened here in *England* in the Reign of our Queen *Elizabeth* of Glorious Memory, and more particularly in the First Part of it, than in the like Compass of Time before or since.

Baron. Ann.

Not but that one great and single Flagitiousness of a few, has been imputed as a sole Cause of Calamity upon many, as by that terrible Storm of Wind at *Rome*, Anno 1017. abundance of People were destroy'd, Christians as well as Jews, a Jew confessing that just before, in a Jewish Synagogue, they had mock'd the Image of our Blessed Saviour. I will not now enquire by what Footsteps of Providence most of our other National Calamities since the Year 1640. may have been observed as Natural Products of the unexampled Barbarity and

Flagi-

Flagitiousness of those Times, and of which the Annual Commemoration draws near. But in the Memory doubtless of some now Living, there hap-^{27th Decemb.}
pened the Winter before, a dreadful Storm or Tem-^{1639.}
pest here in *England*, which a Grave and Learned
Author who observed it, saith was *Vehemens & Omi-*^{Goad. Meteor.}
noſa Tempeſtas. ^{rol.}

But to return from this Digression, If this late Judgment upon Account of which we are here met together, be of that sort as to be the Fore-runner of greater; Then have we cause to fear that *the anger* ^{Jen. 23. 20.}
of the Lord shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have perform'd the thoughts of his heart. Or, as you have it in the 9th Verse of this Chapter, *That he will make an utter end, and that Affliction shall not rise up the second time.*

Lastly, The Lord hath sometimes even his *Way of Mercy in the Whirlwind, and in the Storm*, of which we are every one of us here present living Witnesses; and how many Millions more than we, have, by escaping this late dreadful Judgment (so far as our Lives and Limbs have cause to bless God) seen by so many Wonderful, and some almost Miraculous Deliverances, that *the Lord is slow to Anger!* —
When the Earth shook and trembled, the foundations ^{Psal. 18. 7.}
also of the hills moved, and were shaken, because he was wroth — *When thou, O God, didst march* ^{Hab. 3. 12.}
through the Land in indignation, when thou appearedst in the furiousness of thy Displeasure, even then did thy Tenderness and Pity, the bowels of thy Compassion, shew forth thy Long-sufferance, even towards those Vessels which were fitted for Vengeance,
D as well

as well as towards those who by serious Repentance and deep Humiliation, now call upon thee for Mercy and Forgiveness.

I have gone through all but the very last Words of my Text, *The Clouds are the dust of his feet*, upon which I shall be very brief.

For these Words are only Figurative, to express the Power and Majesty of God when he appears in Judgment; and they denote to us the Obsequiousness and Readiness of all things in the Creation to obey his Commands; that all Meteors are as ready Messengers to execute his Will as the *Angels* themselves who are *Spirits*, and every Element as active as his *Ministers* who are a *Flaming Fire*.

Psal. 104. 4.

The Clouds are the Dust of his Feet, as if the Prophet had said, The Clouds of Heaven however they appear to us, as lifeless, weak, heavy, or fickle and unconstant Agents, if God doth but move, are as intelligent, powerful, nimble and certain Executioners of his Will, as if every one was a right aiming Thunderbolt, and that without any intermediate Cause of Propulsion, they fly out and disperse themselves before him to the Execution of his Pleasure, as readily as the Dust of the Ground flies before one's Feet.

And this is visible to any one who knows how much may be assignable to Clouds and Air as Instrumental Causes of the most considerable Events which concern Mankind.

Job 37. 12.

If God visits the World with Health and Plenty, it is instrumentally done by the Salubrity of the Air and the Fœcundity of the Clouds. *The Heavens*

drop

drop down dew ; the Clouds drop fatness. If God Almighty visits a People or a Nation with Judgments, The Clouds are his Messengers, as in Famines, they with-hold their Moisture, or they pour it down too abundantly.

In Plagues and Pestilential Distempers, the Corruption of the Air is the first assignable Cause of Infection. And in Judgments of this kind, under the Sense of which we are this Day in Humiliation, the dreadful Power of Clouds and Vapours has been a heavy Rod of Vengeance in the Hand of Almighty God : So that I need give you no more Instances, That *his strength is* Psal. 68. 34. *in the Clouds, whether for correction, or for his laud,* Job 37, 13. *or for mercy.*

I have therefore nothing to add but a Word or two of Application.

We meet here together this Day, to Humble our selves under the Almighty Hand of God lifted up against this Nation for our many and provoking Sins, to acknowledge that this was his Doing, and that we have deserved, and must take heed of a worse thing. We are to acknowledge at the same time, that although the Judgment was great, yet the Mercies which attended it are infinite :

We are therefore in the first place to acknowledge, under a deep Sense of our own Unworthiness, the Power and the Justice of God ; for the proper Business of this Day carried on hence-forward throughout the whole Course of our Lives, is the true Use we are to make of this late great Visitation, according to that of the Prophet, *At that day shall a man look to his Maker,* Isaiah 17. 7.

and his Eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel.

We have had many Calls and many Warnings, and we have had many kind and indulgent Overtures of Mercy: No Nation under Heaven hath had a greater Variety of Dangers and of Blessings, and (excepting the finally impenitent Jews) with less Effects of Repentance and Amendment; therefore it may be said of us as it was of them. *Isaiah 65. 1. I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious People which walketh in a way that was not good, v. 3. a People that provoketh me to anger continually to my face.*

If we consider how we have mocked and abused our own Holy Religion, how we have murmur'd at, and traduced our Governours and Superiours, how we have back-bit and envy'd at, and injured one another, how in the general Course of the Age we have set our Minds upon Vanity and Lyes, it is no wonder after all, that when we
 Hof. 8. 7. *have sown the Wind we should reap the Whirlwind.*

2. But in the *Second Place*, seeing that in the midst of Judgment God remembers Mercy, and that every one here present hath particular Reasons upon his own, his Friends and Relations Account, to acknowledge the unspeakable Goodness and Forbearance of God, for the wonderful Deliverance which hath given us this Opportunity of Addressing our selves at this Time to the Throne of Mercy; Let us with thankful and unfeigned Hearts, acknowledge, that it is of his Mercy that we were not all Consumed.

3. And

3. And *Thirdly*, Let this Love of God towards us excite in us a more ardent Love and Affection towards one another. Let those Dangers we have escaped, and those many other Dangers from abroad by a Cruel and desperate War, and even at home by our own unreasonable and shameful Animosities, Divisions, and Dissentions among our selves, awaken us to Love and Union.

— *Nunc ipsa pericula jungant.*

To a firm, a brave and resolute Adherence to the Protestant Interest throughout the World; To a Chearful and Religious Performance of all the Obligations which in Love and Duty are owing to our most Gracious SOVEREIGN, and to a tender-hearted Compassion of one another's Infirmities; That so God may be Glorified, Our Vigilant, Prudent and Pious GOVERNOUR made Easy, and we our selves under both, become instrumental to our own great and lasting Happiness. If we put in Practice such Resolutions of Love and Concord and Brotherly Affection; If we can possess our own Souls with Patience and Peace, and fix in our selves a Tranquility of Mind and Spirit; Then may we expect a Blessing and Prosperity from the Counsels and Measures of our good QUEEN, and her Allies, and upon their Forces by Sea and Land; And then will the Glory of God be exalted more and more, by our making holy Uses of all his Dispensations towards us; Then will the Renown of our SACRED MONARCH be spread as far as the Sun extends his Course; Then
will

will our Princes and Magistrates be Honourable ;
 Isa. 23. 8. and even *our Merchants as Princes, and our Traffickers*
the Honourable of the Earth : Then will our God
 give us his Blessing, and make this People and
 —Chap. 60. 15. *Nation an Eternal Excellency, a Joy of many Ge-*
nerations.

Psal. 103. 10. *He hath not hitherto dealt with us after our sins, nor*
rewarded us according to our iniquities : None of
 his Judgments have hitherto bore any manner of
 proportion to our Deserts, nor would it be con-
 sistent with the Methods of his Providence, with
 respect to the Upholding and Continuance of the
 World, until that Fulness of Time when all things
 here below shall be dissolved : Therefore *will he not*
 Isa 57. 16. *contend for ever, neither will he be always wroth ; for*
the spirit should fail before him, and the souls which
he hath made.

But these Temporal Judgments are only to remind
 us of the Eternal one ; And if these will not
 awaken us, then Nothing is to be expected but
 a fiery Indignation.

Seeing the Sword is now lifted up over all Chri-
 stendom ; that the Judgments of God are abroad in
 the World ; that there is no trust in the Arm of Flesh ;
 and that if we measure our own Dangers by our De-
 merits ; we have just Cause to fear we may prove as
 Conspicuous in the Eye of the World, under greater
 Judgments yet to come, as we were under this late
 Never-to-be-forgotten one : Let Us therefore here at
 Home wrestle with God for Mercy and Blessings, with
 Ardency and Zeal equal at least to that with which
 our Brave Country-men and Allies fight Abroad : We
 have

have the softer and the safer Employment of the two; and if it be at the Expence of Tears for Sin, 'tis much less than that of Blood, for Honour. They do it to obtain a Temporal Reward of Victory; but they likewise and we our selves have an Eternal one in view; which should encourage us all to *fight the good fight of faith*; that so with Repentance for Sins past, and Manly Resolutions for the Time to come, we may, after all the Tempestuousness of Worldly Accidents, become at length *more than Conquerors, through him that loved us.*

To Conclude all then; *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* Isa. 55. 7.

To that Only Wise GOD, and Adorable
TRINITY, *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,*
be all Honour and Glory, &c.

F I N I S.



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